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The Path of Life
and
The Perfect Rest

Rev. JOHN COX

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THE PATH OF LIFE
AND
THE PERFECT REST,
OR
A GLANCE AT THE WORLD ABOVE
AND
THE WORLD TO COME.
BY
A PILGRIM OF SEVENTY.

“ Let me thy power and truth proclaim,
To the surviving age;
And leave a savour of thy name,
When I shall quit the stage.

By long experience I have known
Thy sovereign power to save;
At thy command I venture down
Securely to the grave.”

— MAY 1879 .
— BODLEIANA

LONDON:
HOULSTON & SONS, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1878.

141. m. 751.



TO

MY BELOVED COMPANION AND HELP-MEET

FOR NEARLY FIFTY YEARS,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

ABOUT OUR FATHER'S HOUSE,

PROBABLY MY LAST,

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages contain the matured reflections of my dear and honoured Father on the solemn and mysterious subjects relating to the death of believers, the separate state of their sinless souls and spirits, and their final glory. During the closing years of his long and useful life his mind was constantly dwelling upon these wondrous themes. His thoughts thereon will be not only peculiarly precious to his beloved companion of nearly fifty years, to whom they have been dedicated, and to his large and attached family, but highly valued by his spiritual children, and Christian friends, and it is hoped will be also a source of comfort and instruction to many not personally acquainted with him.

He was a Minister of the Word of Truth for fifty-four years, and in the pulpit and by the pen, he always earnestly sought the glory of God in the conversion of sinners, and in the building up of believers on their most holy faith. He loved the Old Truths, and earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. The last of his numerous publications was in defence of the foundation doctrine of imputed righteousness, and in opposition to neologian teaching on that subject. During his illness he expressed his intention, if restored to health, of making further efforts to impress upon Christians the importance of maintaining this doctrine, for he deeply felt the value of it as affording a sure standing ground, even in the presence of death. On his dying bed he remarked, "If we had never sinned we should not be afraid to stand in the presence of God, but (and the tears filled his eyes, and his voice trembled with emotion) we are in a far better position than if we had never sinned, for we

stand complete in the righteousness of Christ." Again and again he desired that the hymn containing the following verses should be read to him:—

"The countless multitude on high,
Who tune their songs to Jesus' name,
• All merit of their own deny,
And Jesus' blood alone proclaim.

Firm on the ground of sovereign grace,
They stand before Jehovah's Throne,
The only song in that blest place,
Is,—'Thou art worthy! Thou alone!'

* * * *

Without one thought that's good to plead,
O what could shield us from despair
But this, though we are vile indeed,
The Lord our Righteousness is there."

But while renouncing all self-righteousness, and relying only on the atoning righteousness of Christ, the dear departed one was ever seeking to adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour in all things. His loving, faithful,

earnest ministry was always enforced by a consistent, holy, humble, and diligent Christian life, of which the following testimonies extracted from some of the numerous letters received since his death not only afford abundant evidence, but are calculated to stimulate us to greater zeal and activity in the service of our Lord and Master.

“It is pleasing to contemplate the life and death of such a man as your late Father. He was for more than half a century fighting the good fight, and always in the front of the conflict, face to face with the enemy ; and after such a laborious life, we need not wonder that his last audible prayer was—‘Come, Lord Jesus, take me home and give me rest.’”

“His simple reliance *upon*, and intense affection *to* Christ, and his profound homage to God’s Word, were prominent traits in him which we may all pray for grace to follow.”

“How sacred his memory is. Never, never can I forget his ministry. It has brightened all my days



since, notwithstanding all our trials and losses. I seldom ever take up my Bible but I meet with a text I heard him preach from ; then his letters—they are among my treasures. I love to read them over and over, so full of instruction and Christian counsel. I always felt I had some one to go to in times of perplexity."

"Your dear Father both lived and preached the Gospel. The extent of good he accomplished, both by his public ministry and by his writings, and by his daily life, none but God can calculate."

"His preaching to me was singularly helpful often, and I cherish a feeling of the deepest respect for his memory ; for he was undoubtedly such an honest, guileless Christian, and such a hearty follower and lover of Jesus. The clearness of his views on all the foundation truths of Scripture, and the simplicity of his faith and love to the Lord Jesus struck me much, as it must have done all who knew him or ever heard him."

"He has long delighted in the service of his Master, and doubtless been the happy instrument of leading many a poor sinner to the feet of Jesus Christ, to know the virtue that flows from Him for healing purposes. His words and writings have

been very helpful in exposing the many corruptions of God's precious Truth in these perilous times, reminding us of that word—'If thou shalt put a difference between the precious and the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.' In prophetic studies, his little book—'*Immanuel Enthroned, or The King in His Beauty*,' was instrumental in opening the subject to my soul, the result of which has been to open unexplored regions of the precious revelation of our God and Father's will and purpose, in which now my soul finds some of its chiefest delights."

"He was a man above many ; stedfast in the truth, faithful to the Master, full of Christian love, consistent in an inconsistent and capricious age, and prizing, above all things, the old Gospel and the old Cross. . . . Many a precious word has he spoken to the Church of God in the pages of this periodical. He was always so willing, and so obliging, so ready, and so fresh."—*Extracted from a note by DR. H. BONAR, in the "Christian Treasury," April, 1878.*

There is much that I would like to add to the foregoing statements and testimonies, but must abstain from doing so, having regard to

the desire expressed by my dear Father in the following extracts, the first of which is taken from the wrapper enclosing the manuscript of this book, dated the 11th of March, 1876; and the second from a "*Memorandum*," written by him for perusal after his death.

"This little work was written in the year 1872, just before I attained the age of seventy. I thought of printing it then, but circumstances hindered. If spared a year or two, I hope to see this done. If I should be removed first, I should like that it should come forth just as it is, with little or no reference to the author."

"I wish much that no memoir or even obituary should be attempted. I have said all that is worth knowing about myself, and perhaps more, in my '*Book for Grandchildren*,' '*Old Truths*,' vol. III., and other places."

In deference to my dear Father's wish, I will add no more, except to express a hope that these few words respecting him might give additional weight to the following

message from his dying lips. Shortly before his death he said—"TELL ALL THE DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS TO WALK SO AS TO PLEASE GOD." Thus shall we be enabled to walk, if we continue to take heed to the divine injunction—"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

JOHN COX.

BEDWARDINE, UPPER NORWOOD.

May, 1878.

INTRODUCTION.

“THOU wilt shew me the path of life.” Such was the persuasion of Messiah when He was “a man of sorrows” on the earth, and with this great thought He comforted Himself in the midst of all His griefs. His Heavenly Father honoured His confidence, and had fellowship with Him in His joys and hopes; in due time He fulfilled to Him all the promises on which He had rested. Amid the deep darkness of Gethsemane, and in the still darker gloom of the last three hours on the Cross; Messiah still hoped in God, for He saw “*the path of life*” before Him. “The path of life (says Mr. Jay) was

His passage from the Sepulchre to the glory, from the tomb of Joseph to the Palace of the Great King." This path no one had yet trodden, Enoch and Elijah had entered heaven, but did not go thither through the grave. Thousands had "entered into rest," but left their bodies behind in the grasp of death.

Christ is a pattern for our confidence, as regards both the separate state and final glory. The dying Saviour committed His Soul into the hands of His Father in the full assurance that it would suffer no loss in the separate state, but would be brought again into union with His body in a glorious condition. To what a perfect rest, to what exalted ecstatic pleasures, will that path of life lead. The prospect was satisfying to Christ personally, and also as the Head of that innumerable host which shall follow Him to glory.

The Holy Spirit now shews all God's believing people the path of life, and comforts them by revealing the glory to which that path leads.



The Lord Jesus is the example of His people as regards His inward life of trust and hope, and it becomes the members to be very conversant with those wondrous things, the contemplation of which sustained the suffering Head.

We should remember also that when the Saviour used the words “Thou wilt shew me the path of life,” He was in a surety condition, having to bear the sins of many; but we who follow Him in the path of faith, look back on His accomplished work, and resting thereon, look up to that glory into which He has entered, and greatly rejoice therein. And not only so, but we look forward with hope “to see Him as He is,” and to share with Him “fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore,” in the presence of “His Father and our Father, His God and our God.” “What can be (says Dr. Owen) a greater encouragement to resign our souls into Christ’s hands, than a daily contemplation of the Glory of His Person, His power, His exaltation, His offices and grace.”

A person emigrating from his native land to a distant shore, would naturally just before embarking, and during the first part of his voyage, be much occupied with preparations, farewells, and getting accustomed to a sea life, and forming an acquaintance with his fellow passengers. But when the vessel begins to get near that new country in which the rest of his life is to be spent, he begins to feel a still deeper interest therein. He looks out anxiously to get the first glimpse thereof: and if he expects to greet some dear familiar faces on the unknown shore, the out-look becomes the more earnest and absorbing.

Something akin to this are the feelings of the writer, as the steady progress of time brings him within a few days of that "three score years and ten," of which the Psalmist speaks; and while he calls to mind how short his time on earth must be. For some time past he has desired to become more and more familiar with the better land, "the land of the living," "the heavenly country." He knows full well that no infor-

mation concerning it can be obtained from any other quarter than the grand old Book. As soon might the astronomer expect to discover a new planet by digging into the earth, or diving down in the ocean, as the Christian expect to gain new discoveries of the world above, or the world to come, by listening to human imaginings. Still he feels sure that the Bible says more about the path of life, and the permanent rest, than many Christians think. If we were to search our Father's Book more diligently, and prayerfully, we should get more definite and delightsome views of our Father's House. We much need to do this to cheer us on our journey, and some aged ones who are breasting their worst storms as they are nearing home, especially require to have "things to come" more vividly revealed by the good Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

Much of the Christian's joy arises from hope. He is told "to rejoice in hope;" he is said to be "saved by (or in) hope." Having such precious promises and glorious prophecies, he may well

rejoice in hope of grace being given him to the end of the pilgrimage, and also rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Well has the poet said of the tried believer :—

“But still he had a source
 Of happiness, that men could never give
 Nor take away. The avenues that led
 To immortality, before him lay ;
 He saw with faith’s far reaching eye the fount
 Of life, his Father’s House, his Saviour God,
 And borrowed thence, to help his present need.”

Again he writes :—

“The Christian had this one advantage more,
 That when his earthly pleasures failed—and fail
 They always did to every soul of man—
 He sent his hopes on high ; looked up and reached
 His sickle forth, and reaped the fields of heaven,
 And plucked rich clusters from the Vine of God.”

It is proposed in the following remarks to glance at the blessed condition into which believers enter when they die, and also at some things connected with, and immediately subsequent to that solemn change. Perhaps in recording the thoughts which have passed

through his own mind on those mighty and mysterious themes, the writer may also express those of others; and if his words should be helpful in removing any doubts, scattering any fears, or deepening any right impressions, to the Lord shall be all the glory.

While referring more especially to the separate state of the soul, the vastly more important subject of full and final glory will not be overlooked.

The object of all will be to brighten our hopes of a better world; wean the heart from the present passing scene; deepen a sense of responsibility; and especially to endear that Saviour, and His great Salvation, without whom our past, present, and future would be full of gloom and uncertainty.

*Section I.***THE NEW TESTAMENT TESTIMONY RESPECTING
DEATH AND THE LORD'S COMING IN
RELATION TO BELIEVERS.**

UNDERSTATING not unfrequently leads to overstating, and then before long there comes a re-action in an opposite direction. Thus we think it has been with reference to the two important points of death and the Lord's coming, as regards the future of believers.

Some years ago it had become the habit of most writers and preachers when discoursing on life after death, to refer almost exclusively to the separate state, and to say little or nothing about the personal coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the body. Many act thus still, some go farther, and even question whether there will be any future personal coming of Christ, or any literal resurrection of the body.

When the glorious truths of the Lord's pre-millennial advent and the first resurrection of the saints were revived and extensively promulgated some fifty years ago, a tendency was manifested to overlook death and the separate state. In some cases serious error was introduced, by which much Scripture was mis-applied, and something very much like materialism developed.

While allowing, to the full, that the coming of the Lord, the resurrection and rapture of His saints, rather than death and the separate state, are the great themes of the New Testament, and exhibit the true hope of God's people ; while we believe also that in these are found, when rightly received, the greatest amount of motive power for holiness, it may yet be well to enquire, what the New Testament says about *death and the separate state* as regards the people of God.

This question appears the more important if we consider that it is *now* an established

fact that the *majority* of the redeemed family are interested in it. Those saints who lived in the times of the Apostles did not know for certainty that the coming of the Lord would be so long delayed, and that so many generations of true believers would have to die and turn to dust. Now we have reason to conclude that the far greater part of the members of Christ's body will be found among those who sleep in Him, and not among those who will be alive at His coming. Very consoling, therefore, is the assurance of the Apostle—"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." (1 Thess. v. 9, 10.) If the connexion of these words just quoted is examined, it will be found that they refer back to that grand consoling passage in 1 Thess. iv. 14—18, in which the Apostle is comforting those mourning saints whose dear ones slept in Jesus. We will first indicate a

few other passages which as we think clearly prove that our gracious, loving, Father has made much provision for His children's comfort as regards death and the grave.

It is no small matter to be assured that *death* shall not be able to separate the saints from the "love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. viii. 39. Does not this teach us that communion with that love will still go on when death has done its work, and separated soul and body for a time? We may therefore sing with an old poet—

"What means my beating heart,
To be afraid of death?
My life and I shan't part
When I resign my breath.

I said sometimes with tears—
"Ah me! I'm loth to die!"
Lord, silence Thou these fears,
My life's with Thee on high."

We should also ever bear in mind that this separate state, though we can know so little

12 *Death and the Lord's Coming*

about it, will certainly in some respects be an *advance* on our present condition with all its privileges, consolations and hopes. The Apostle plainly declares that “to depart and to be with Christ, will be *far better*”—Phil. i. 23. Sin will be absent, Christ will be present. When “absent from the body,” we shall be “present with the Lord.”—2 Cor. v. 8. While yet groaning in this tabernacle the true believer often sings with deep joy as regards this “far better state”—

“There shall I see His face,
And never, never sin,
There from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.”

We are quite sure that his hope in this respect will never make ashamed.

Mr. Champneys tells us “that over the tombs of the early Christians in the Catacombs, there is often carved a ship just setting sail, having cast off the rope that fastened it to the shore. That is the exact meaning of Paul, he had a desire to cast off

the rope that tied him to this earth and sail away to where Christ is." Archbishop Leighton has beautifully said—"When that great separatist death, comes, so far from separating the believer's soul from the beloved Lord Jesus, it is carried into the nearest union and fullest enjoyment of Him for ever."

There are very many precious promises and assurances in the New Testament which are calculated to take away all terror from death, and scatter gloom from the grave. The Lord Jesus said—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." John viii. 51. To all who belong to Christ, death is a means of good. "Death will minister to the expansion of the divine life. Believers belong not to death, but death to them." Those shall not see death in any terrible or injurious sense who can say—"WE SEE JESUS," and who live "looking unto Jesus." With the

weighty words above quoted, we should connect those addressed by the Lord to Martha—"I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." John xi. 25. These words are as rich in comfort as they are deep in meaning, and overflowing with tenderness.

He who thus spake came to die that "He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 15. Now He looks back with satisfaction upon His accomplished work, and with tender love assures all His believing people, "because I live, ye shall live also." He would have them in this world of change and death comfort themselves with the words which so often cheered His own heart, in Ps. xvi. 8—11 and xxii. 22.

The Apostle, in summing up what believers have in Christ, says "death is yours." Death is in the covenant. The first time death is mentioned in God's Word it is found in a threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. The last time we read of death, it is wrapped up in a promise which Christ will make good to all who trust in Him—"THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH." Rev. xxi. 4.

It is worthy of observation that when the Apostles speak of "the Church," or the corporate condition of God's people, they dwell only on the Lord's coming and the resurrection of the saints; "we shall not all sleep; we shall all be changed; we who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord." As a *body*, the Church never dies. When an Apostle speaks of himself as an individual, he refers to "death. Peter says—"I must shortly put off this my tabernacle," and speaks of a period "after his decease."

Paul also says—"the time of my *departure* is at hand, and I am ready." Most consoling, also, are his words in a passage already referred to, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. i. 20, 21. This is enough; if Christ be magnified in us by death, if to die is *gain*, all must be well in death, and after death. And how should such expectations influence us *now*? We should be very desirous daily to realize the force of the glorious words in Rom. xiv. 7—9, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living."

If we daily lived on Christ, leaning on His

work, and listening to His words; then, though “the outward man should perish, the inward man would be renewed day by day;” and we should be confident, that “*when* our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.” 2 Cor. iv. 16—18, v. 1—8. There is no doubt that this grand passage reaches forward to the hour of resurrection when “mortality shall be swallowed up of life,” even the hour spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. 55—57; yet it does not overlook the *interval* between death and the resurrection, but casts a cheering light into the separate state,—“absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

Romans viii. 10, 11 is another most important and consoling passage which bears on this subject. “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead (or subject to death) because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that

raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." If, says the Apostle, the body die, recollect that your spirit is LIFE, because of righteousness. Those who have on the glorious robe of Immanuel's righteousness can never die, as those must die who will not submit thereto. And if the spirit is life in consequence of union to the second Adam, if it shall "reign in life by one Jesus Christ," body and soul for ever, when sin and death shall be things gone by, shall not that spirit when separated from the body still live a blessed life? Surely it will be so, for "our Lord Jesus Christ hath abolished (nullified) death, and brought life and immortality (incorruptibility) to light through the Gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10. In that light let us walk till we have finished our course, and then we shall *begin* to realize the blessedness of being "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." "We,



through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," even for all that the righteousness of Christ received by faith entitles us to. Gal. v. 5. We are now saved in hope, and are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." And if we have to take death and the grave in our way, with such Scriptures as we have quoted, and these are not all, we need fear no evil. Death is a conquered foe, He who died for us, and in dying conquered death, is *our living Saviour friend*, and if we have to die, as we think will be the case, He will bring us safely through, enable us as He did Peter to glorify God by dying, (John xxi. 18) and then glorify Himself by raising us up again in His own perfect image of power, beauty and immortality.

Let us learn to fear sin rather than death, and seek even in weakness of body and conscious infirmity, to serve Him zealously,

who hath redeemed us to Himself by His own precious blood.

“With patient foot and trustful breast,
Hold on thy way till even,
Sweet is the rest that waits the blest,
Upon the hills of heaven.”

*Section 2.***THE CONDITION INTO WHICH THE BELIEVER
ENTERS AFTER DEATH.**

HAVING surveyed the subject generally, and quoted some passages from the New Testament which we consider refer to a conscious and happy state between death and the resurrection, we will endeavour to go a little more into detail on this most interesting subject. And first, we would enquire whether we do not sometimes when speaking of the happy condition of believers immediately after death, unwittingly misapply Scripture by using texts which refer to the final state, to describe the separate state. One grand text usually quoted is Rev. xiv. 13—"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit,

that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.” Without pretending to speak confidently, it seems to me that if the connection of this passage is carefully examined, it will be found to be parallel with Rev. xx. 4—6, and to refer to “the first resurrection.” It is quite true that those who die in the Lord are blessed while dying, when dead, and after death. It is true also that they rest from their labours in the separate state, but we think that the blessedness, the rest, and the reward here spoken of will be fully entered on only at the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the body. “To those who are troubled *rest* will be granted when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.” 2 Thess. i. 7. Then will the rest which remaineth for the people of God be entered on. Heb. iv. 9. Then will the wheat be gathered into the barn. Compare Rev. xiv. 15 with Matt. xiii. 30.

The expressions uttered and the terms used with reference to departed saints by survivors are not always such as the Scriptures warrant. Most of us probably have thought, spoken, and sung somewhat as follows. That the redeemed soul immediately after death enters the world of glory, is ushered into the full blaze of the manifested presence of God, and introduced to an innumerable company of saints and angels. We have, it may be, used good John Newton's words—

“One gentle sigh the fetter breaks,
We scarce can say he's gone !
Before the happy spirit takes,
Its seat around the throne.”

Now, have we Scripture warrant for such a conclusion ? We have already entered our protest against the miserable notion of departed spirits sleeping in an insensible condition until the resurrection day, and have given some proof from the New Testament that the separate state will be one

of happy consciousness, of sinless holiness, and of unclouded hope; but we think that "GLORY" in its full and perfect sense will not be realized till the resurrection of the body at the coming of the Lord. Glory means "*visibility or manifestation*," and the sons of God will be manifested and glorified together with Christ, when He shall come in His own glory and His Father's glory. Is it quite proper, then, to speak of being glorified at death, and of having then a full introduction to all the inhabitants of the spirit world?

Without pretending to speak positively, is it not at least more probable that the emancipated soul's introduction to the world above, and its blessed inhabitants and marvellous glories will be done gradually? Instead of beholding *all* the holy angels and saved human spirits at once, and so be plunged in a moment into a sea of heavenly wonders; may not the newly arrived spirit

find itself at first in the society and under the guidance of one or a few of those happy angels or human spirits long used to that bright clime, and so be gradually led on and led up; be as it were acclimatized to that strangely blessed region? May we not find it there even as it is here, that we cannot all at once have to do with society as a whole.

On this earth we are units in a vast host; drops in an ocean of more than a thousand millions of beings. Here we can only mix with a few at a time, and must gradually enlarge our acquaintance. May it not be so also in the next state? We must not form our expectations of what a *first* experience of heavenly blessedness will be to us after death, as individuals, from those passages which describe the fully developed glory of the whole Church after the resurrection. The separate state of blessed souls is not described in Rev. v., vii. 9—17, xx. 4—6, xxi. 1—7, xxii. 1—5, though these passages are often

thus applied. We must rather rest satisfied with the declarations in Phil. i. 21, 23, that “to die is *gain* ;” to “depart and be with Christ is *far better*,” and with inferences fairly deducible from several other passages. One thing is, we think, fully settled by the text in Phil. i. 21, and confirmed by 2 Cor. v. 8, that in some real, wonderful, satisfying way, far transcending all we realize now, departed souls are *with the Lord*, ever feeling Him near, and rejoicing in the absolute and irrevocable certainty of bliss in Him ; yet having, it may be, some special seasons of manifestation of His presence among them. It may be, as some have thought, that John xvii. 24 will be fulfilled in the separate state—“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may *behold* My glory, which Thou hast given Me.”

The thought that the spirits of the saved will at first be under the guidance of one or

more of the heavenly host, seems to be sanctioned by our Lord's words—"the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." No one, we think, who duly reverences God's Word, and who believes that the Lord Jesus spoke simple truth, but must allow that the Lord here teaches the continuous existence of the human soul, that at death it passes into a state of conscious misery or happiness; and that angels minister at death, and after death, to redeemed spirits.

Though we do not of course refer to it as any *authority*, yet we cannot help thinking that the beautiful description which Bunyan gives of Christian and Hopeful *after* they passed "the river," will be found much more true to fact than many things that have been written on the celestial world. We suppose the great dreamer thought that he found his warrant in the Lord's words which have been just quoted. Dr. Cheever has well

observed on this noble passage—"Bunyan does not attempt to describe or even to shadow forth the meeting of the pilgrims with the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, in the celestial city: this would have been presumption. He has gone as far as the purest devotion and the sweetest poetry could go, as far as an imagination kindled, informed, and sustained by the Holy Scriptures could carry us, he has set us down amidst the ministry and conversation of angels, at the gate of the city, and as the gate opens to let in the pilgrims, he lets us *look* in ourselves, but no farther does either revelation or imagination trace the picture. The description comes from the heart, and from an imagination fed, nourished and disciplined by the Scriptures, and this is the secret of its power, and the secret of the depth and heavenly glow of its ravishing colours, and of the emotions with which it stirs the soul even to tears."

There is one passage in the **Apocalypse** of which we should make constant use while travelling on through joy and sorrow to that mysterious and blessed world which, after all, is so very near to us,—“**A**nd **H**e laid His right hand upon me, saying, ‘**F**ear not; **I** am the first and the last, and **T**HE **L**IVING **O**NE, **A**nd **I** was dead, and behold, **I** am living for ever and ever: **A**nd have the keys of death and of Hades.’” (Tregelles’s translation of Rev. i. 17, 18.) This should be enough for us; Jesus knows what it is to die, He died for us, yea, He hath overcome death on our behalf. He is mightier than death now, He hath dominion over the invisible world. All is unveiled to Him, all subject to Him. He tells us to abide in Him now, as our element, our sanctuary, our home; to think of Him as our **A**lmighty, condescending **S**AVIOUR **F**REND. “**S**urely,” says one “we need not fear entering upon any territory where He reigns, however gloomy it may look in the distance. **W**ill

not His supremacy, presence, and grace convert it into a region of light?" The antidote for everything evil; and the key to everything good in this world or the next, is—"Abide in Me," "Continue ye in My love." He is our forerunner, and if we live in Him, and for Him, we may confidently say in death, as Stephen did,—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And He *will* receive it, and this will prevent us from feeling strange or lonely when we enter on the spirit world. The leading idea of Christ in this grand passage is to connect the future blessed life of His people with His own, and to show that their deliverance from death and the grave is the result of His death and resurrection. A Christian visitor once observed to a young believer who was dying, "that when he had passed through death's gloomy portals, the first object *seen* would be *His* gracious face who had the keys, and to whom the issues of death belonged," which remark greatly comforted him. Another

young Christian, who lived to be a very aged witness for Christ, once said to his godly mother—"I wish there was a way of going to God without putting off this tabernacle. I am afraid of what we shall see and converse with when we are out of the body." To which she replied,—"I wonder you are so fearful. If I was to be led through hell after I am out of the body, I should not fear if Christ was with me." This reminds us of another little incident. "Two little boys sat listening eagerly while their grandmother was telling them the Bible story of Elijah going to heaven in a whirlwind and chariot of fire; when little Willie interrupted her—'O, Sammy, wouldnt you have been afraid?' Sammy hesitated for a moment, and then replied,—'No, not if I had the Lord to drive.'"

Looking unto Jesus, and listening unto Jesus, will suffice for us as regards our progress through this world, and an entrance

upon another. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." "I go to prepare a place for you." These and similar words should suffice. No place will seem strange to the saved soul, if Jesus, our best friend is there, and reveals to us His grace and His glory. A well-grounded confidence of oneness with Him, will, above all things, scatter the fear of death, and satisfy the soul. The separation of soul and body cannot separate from His love. We are going to One, we may confidently say, whom we have long known by means of His Word, and the teachings of the Comforter. Whatever mystery may brood over the act of dying, and our entrance on the spirit world, His glorious *words* are plain, and He will make them good. On His finished work we rest, and in His undying friendship do we rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

“Earth with its dark and dreadful ills,
Recedes and fades away ;
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly hills ;
Ye gates of death, give way !

My soul is full of whispered song ;
My blindness is my sight ;
The shadows that I feared so long
Are all alive with light.

The while my pulses faintly beat,
My faith doth so abound,
I feel grow firm beneath my feet
The green, immortal ground.

That faith to me a courage gives,
Low as the grave to go ;
I know that my Redeemer lives—
That I shall live I know.

The palace walls I almost see
Where dwells my Lord and King,
O grave ! where is thy victory ?
O death ! where is thy sting ?”

*Section 3.***ANXIETIES ALLAYED.**

BESIDE those things which will at times crowd upon the mind as to *how* we shall feel in dying, and *what* will be the nature of the world we shall enter into; there are two other points which sometimes occasion anxiety. One is *personal*, and the other *relative*; over both some obscurity hangs, but light from God's Word is not altogether wanting, though we must die and rise again to have all made quite plain.

Sometimes I have thus mused, and perhaps others have done the same. "I do trust alone in the Lord Jesus for salvation, and long to be like Him; I believe that I owe all to the Holy Spirit's gracious operations, and I can truly say that I hate sin, and love

holiness, but I deeply feel that I am not yet fully holy, and that I have not yet done with sin. It is within me as tinder, which the sparks of temptation soon ignite ; yea, as an evil fountain that bubbles up, and sometimes overflows in looks, words or acts that cause bitter sorrow. I am getting old, my earthly house is dissolving, yet sin is still in it as a loathsome leprosy. I must die soon ; soul and body must part company ; *how will sin die ?* Will this coming separation annihilate sin ? I know that the body, though “sown in corruption,” though a “vile body,” or “body of humiliation,” will no more be capable of sinning ; but what of the soul ? Will that spring upward free from the terrible taint, throwing off at once and for ever that tormenting nightmare which has, more or less ever since regeneration, pressed down its energies, and been a source of misery ? Will my present sponge-like memory be pressed dry of many things it now retains, yet wishes to forget ? To these

and other questionings we may surely reply that all this must be included in the “*far better*,” in being “absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” It must be true as we have sung—

“Death which puts an end to life,
Will put an end to sin.”

And that, as John Flavel says—“One dying hour will do that for us which a thousand praying hours could not.” Good John Bunyan exclaims—“O, how hardly is sin got out of the soul when once it is in; the blood of Christ takes away the guilt of sin, inherent grace weakens the filth, but death and the grave is the place at the mouth of which sin, as to the being of sin, and the saved, must have a final parting. Not that the grave itself is of a sin-purifying quality, but God will follow Satan home to his own door, and will then, when the devil thought to swallow us up, even by the power of His

mercy make us (at our coming thence) shine like the sun, and look like the angels."

Though we do not for a moment believe the old heresy that moral evil is essentially connected with matter, yet there seems to be such a connection between sin and the *mortal* body as only death can dissolve. To effect this annihilation of sin no purgatory will be needed. No, it must be "Jesus only" for the annihilation of the being of sin, as well as for the annihilation of its guilt and power. He who put it away judicially from before God, will put it away actually and eternally out of us. Omnipotent grace will so cleanse every thought and feeling of the soul, that though a thousand facts connected with time may be remembered, yet there will be no power in them to produce an evil thought, or awaken a wrong emotion. Who can tell what will be the "*expulsive power*" of a full apprehension of the work of Christ for us, the love of Christ to us, and of the vision of His glory.

We have further testimony upon this subject as regards the state which follows on the resurrection of the body. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," (1 John iii. 2, Col. iii. 4) and be "fashioned like unto His glorious body." Phil. iii. 20.

The Lord Jesus says that in the age to come the raised ones shall be like the angels. This, no doubt will include a wondrous degree of blessedness, but it does not bring out the fulness of what the saints will become.

Yet is there something truly wonderful in the thought, that the trials, temptations and sins through which the saints have passed, and out of which the Lord has delivered them, will render them capable of higher joys, deeper wonder, sublimer gratitude, and more profound humility than unsinning angels can ever realize. They have never known the need of pardon, have never been

tossed on the waves of sorrow, nor been exposed for years to the fiery darts of Satan. We have, and when all these have for ever gone by, who can tell what will be the joy of having for ever got rid of guilt, sin, sorrow, and uncertainty.

“O the joy of being holy!
How delightful that will be!
Mind and body given solely
To the bliss of serving Thee ! ”

This, this alone, to be sinless, will be joy indeed beyond all thought. Blessed thought! to be as incapable of sinning as the holy angels or as Christ Himself. Some one has well said, “a being may be free to choose, and yet be incapable of choosing evil. God is free, and yet He cannot lie. In heaven, where all susceptibility of temptation to sin is for ever excluded, and the strength of benevolent impulse prompting the will ever increasing in power, the fall of saints into sin will be an absolute moral impossibility. In

their heavenly condition the redeemed are little less than pure embodiments or forms of truth and goodness, and as truth cannot cease to be truth, nor goodness cease to be goodness, without a contradiction, neither can the saints cease to be holy." How this complete sanctification will be wrought we cannot understand, but that it will be done we are quite confident, and even now rejoice in hope thereof.

Now if this sinlessness will become a *fact* in a moment in the case of those yet imperfect saints who will be alive at the coming of the Lord, and if this be true then both of body and soul, surely it can and will be also true of the soul when it departs to be with Christ, and remains for a while in the separate state. Let us think most of the eternal state, which will be an absolutely perfect one as regards our whole being and all its surroundings. Perfection is not till the resurrection. Though at death sin will be gone from the soul, yet



the results of sin as regards the body will remain until “the day of redemption;” “then shall I be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.” Ps. xvii. 15.

The second or relative point, concerning which anxiety is sometimes felt, refers to the saints who are gone before us, or may come after us. What Christ has done for us, what He is to us, and our oneness with Him, can alone avail to make such a meeting free from all embarrassment, and the fellowship that will follow fraught with ever deepening joy.

Have not some Christians in hours of retrospection and self-scrutiny sometimes said to themselves “How can I meet some of God’s people in heaven whom I have known here?” No doubt many true saints in consequence of “falling out by the way,” by the wrong use of the tongue, and things more grievous still, have injured each other, and have died without being brought together

again into the fellowship they once enjoyed. Such things have happened through pride, self-will, or from some other causes, for which one or both parties were more or less to blame, and thus the cause of God was injured. But in what good John Howe calls "*the all-reconciling world*," selfishness, pride, exactingness, and a disposition to excuse ourselves and criminate others will never enter. There the soul will be all light, and actions with their motives and results will be seen as they really are. But how will many saved ones meet in heaven without a degree of shame on the one side, or of exultation on the other? The only answer we can give, as in many other things is—"JESUS ONLY." The Lord Jesus alone can produce and perpetuate perfect harmony, and He will. He will be Mediator between man and man, and make all one in Himself—He is gone before into the upper sanctuary to make all right for all comers. He is gone not only to prepare places and to prepare persons for

places, but to prepare all saved ones to meet each other as they ought, and wish to do. No saint can have done so much wrong to his imperfect brother, as every one of us has done to the only perfect One. Glorious, blessed, loving Saviour ! He has borne the sins of all in His own body on the tree ; He has borne with all the ill manners and mistakes of each ; He will bring all safe home at an infinite outlay of merit and might. He will make all perfect between each one in heaven, however wrong it might have been below on earth. Should not this pleasing hope exert a power to sweeten our tempers, to sanctify our intercourse, to keep us from falling out by the way, and to influence us to aim to imitate the forbearance, the condescension, and gentleness of Christ ; and also lead us to make any restitution in our power now to those whom our consciences tell us we have in any way injured or failed to help. No doubt those who have possessed most of the meek and forgiving mind of Christ here, who

like Him have condescended to men of low estate, gone about doing good, seeking bruised reeds to bind up, and cast-out ones to gather in, will be nearest to Him in His Kingdom.

The great words “ CHRIST IS ALL ; AND IN ALL,” which we can pronounce so readily, and so little enter into here, will be gloriously apprehended in heaven. Christ will then be ALL to each, every individual saint will say of Him and to Him,

“ Thou art *my* sea of love,
Where all my pleasures roll ;
The circle where my passions move,
The centre of my soul.”

And He the blessed and glorious One, the bearer of the curse, and the bringer in of all blessing, He who bore our sins, carried our sorrows, and often stood and knocked at the heart’s closed door ; He will be *in* each, and there will be nothing opposed to Him, nothing unlike Him, in any one of His people. There will be nothing to hinder the perpetual out-

flowing of the spirit of an infinite in-dwelling Christ one toward the other.

And what a power of receptivity shall we possess in heaven. It will then indeed be “grace for grace,” “glory for glory,” because the Holy Spirit will work mightily and unhindered in every holy, happy, soul. We shall indeed be saved even to the uttermost of Christ’s own thoughts and desires; saved and blessed “according to that working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

In that happy state we shall no longer have to meet saints in whom love is very imperfectly developed, but saints in whom the loving One will live and triumph. Christ will then be “glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.”

The chief element of future blessedness will be the triumph of Christ-like *love* in every heart. Is not this the reason why the

Apostle introduces the future state into 1 Cor. xiii. ? While here love has been so imperfect, our disagreements with true saints, and differences of opinion have been so many and great, that on reflection we must all be very dissatisfied with our love. There, all will be perfect within and around, and love will flow out in full complacence to every one and everything.

Have we not sometimes met with an apparently very loving and unselfish person, and thought if all were like *you*, and that *always*, what a world of happiness would even this be. But still sin, death, and change would be here. But “when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.” *Now* we see in a mirror darkly, then face to face. *Now* in Christ it is *good* : the separate state will be **BETTER** : the resurrection state **BEST**. *Now saved*, next *safe*, and last, fully and eternally *satisfied*.

It is only by contemplating Christ, and

believing that we shall be like Him that we can get rid of all sad and gloomy thoughts at the prospect of meeting those we may have injured, or stumbled, or even failed to help as we should or could have done.

The believing Israelite could look with a degree of confidence toward the earthly sanctuary when the annual ceremonial atonement had been offered and accepted, surely we may do so as regards the heavenly sanctuary where the Lord Jesus is gone to intercede and minister. The day of atonement must have been a suitable day for brotherly forgiveness, as well as for making them all "clean from their sins before the Lord." The far-reachingness of the infinite atonement of Christ both as regards God and man, who can adequately conceive! It brings us into friendship and fellowship with God and with each other *now*, "but our Lord Jesus Christ died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should **LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM.**"

All things in heaven and earth reconciled by the blood of His cross. Col. i. 20. "All things gathered together in one in Him." Eph. i. 12. Such is God's purpose, and He will accomplish it to the praise of the glory of His grace. Then will indeed be *the perfect rest*, the keeping of a Sabbath which remaineth for the people of God."

*Section 4.***RESPONSIBILITY CONSIDERED.**

THERE is another point connected with this subject to which it is necessary to make some reference, though we can only just glance at it. We refer to that "account" which several passages of Scripture say that God's people will have to give. It may be that not a few believers have thought as follows: Though the consideration of an entrance into an untried state of being, has at times oppressed me, though I have wondered how I shall meet some of God's children in that world; yet I have been still more affected at the thought of being judged, and having to

give an account of the deeds done in the body: an account of ourselves to God. Rom. xiv. 12, 2 Cor. v. 10. This has often startled me, nor have there been wanting many curious and puzzling questions in connection with this solemn point. I have thought—does the assurance that God will make manifest the counsels of all hearts, “that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,” imply that the sins of believers will be exposed in the day of God? Again, does not Hebrews ix. 28, “After death the judgment,” seem to teach that immediately *after* death there will be some expression of approval or disapproval, and that judgment then substantially will take place? Some have met the last question by saying that the soul will sleep through all the period between death and the resurrection, so that to each individual the next moment after death will be the day of judgment.

To this we reply, that it is a poor thing to meet a scripture difficulty by introducing a doctrine which is a flat contradiction of many Scriptures, some of which have been already introduced. There must be some better way than this of meeting such thoughts, and of quelling the fears which they produce.

There can be no doubt but that each immortal spirit as it passes into eternity will then know, if it knew not before, what will be its condition for ever. But this is not the oft predicted judgment, which will not be a private, but a most public proceeding.

It must also be borne in mind that there is a great difference between the saints being judged in order for reward, and public approbation of their character and course; and a judgment to decide respecting the *state* of the soul. In other words we must distinguish between "the tribunal of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10, and the "great white throne," Rev. xx. 11, 12. We must never let go the assurance

of the Lord Jesus that for those who hear His words and believe in Him who sent Him there is no judgment, they having passed from death unto life, John v. 25. Also the declaration of the apostle "that there is therefore *now* no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Romans viii. 1. Nothing can ever set aside these grand facts. Those who have believed on the Lord Jesus are looked upon by God as having died and risen with Christ, and cannot have each to be judged in his own person as to the fact whether his state is blessed or cursed. They are one with Christ, and even now it is their privilege to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 33, 34. But on the other hand, far be it from us to set aside those numerous scriptures which plainly teach that saints must

stand before the tribunal of Christ ; that “ every man’s work will be tried of what *sort* it is,” and that each will receive his own reward according to his own labour. These words also must be true, and will certainly receive a fulfilment. All united to Christ by a living faith are alike fully justified, all shall be completely sanctified ; but all will not be alike rewarded, or in the same degree be approved by the Great Master.

It would be well if Christians gave much earnest heed to a passage, which is we fear, too much overlooked. “ If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world,” 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32. Mark, no true believer will be condemned *with the world* hereafter, but they may be chastened of the Lord *now* in consequence of sin as were some of the Corinthians, “ for this cause some are weak and sickly among you

and many sleep." Saints should judge themselves, that is judge their *ways*, that so they may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, may not bring down heavy chastenings now; and we may add from 1 Cor. iii., may not have their works burned up and be "themselves saved yet so as by fire."

To avoid these present and future dangers and to have "an abundant entrance ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom," we are told to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, 2 Peter i. 11; and to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Whether the sins of God's people, the guilt of which has been for ever done away, will be brought to light in the day which shall try every man's work, we will not speak positively. Some passages we have already cited and especially 1 Cor. iii. 5, must not be lightly passed over. We know that in His Holy Word the sins of many of His sa

are already made as public as the noon-day sun, and however we may shrink from it, we cannot be quite sure that it will not yet be so with many more.

This subject of giving an account of “deeds done in the body” has its difficulties. When we think of full justification in Christ, of intimate union with Him, and of what *these* involve; there seems *to us* to be no room for such texts as those just referred to. *But there they are*, very solemn, plain and positive. They must be true, they will be made good, and it is no use to construct a system which excludes them.

There are other things equally difficult, which we are obliged to receive though we can by no means reconcile them. Why sin and misery are allowed to exist under the government of a wise, holy, loving, and Almighty Being, is a problem we cannot solve. How divine sovereignty and human responsibility, how the doctrine of predesti-

nation and the free invitation of the gospel can be reconciled, no one knows, and perhaps never will know. We believe both sides of these and other deep things, and leave God to explain them or not as He pleases. How they can be reconciled with each other and with His perfection, is not ours to explain. So with the case before us, suffice it that it is true beyond doubt, that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," yet that such must give in their account. Both when rightly used are most practical. May the good Spirit teach us how to use them.

One thing we may be quite sure of, which is, that God who is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus, will not remember His people's sin to their condemnation, "He will not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities;" but He will do that which will be most for the manifestation of His own glory, and with

that all His people will be fully satisfied. If His glory requires the bringing of things to light, which we shudder even now to think upon, we shall no doubt fully acquiesce in it then.

Let the daily motto of each saint be "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST," then to die will be gain; and "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Let us aim to be like him *now*, for there is the strongest reason to conclude that the degree of our conformity to Him on earth, will have an influence on our condition in heaven and through eternity.

It may be also that the *kind* of entrance which each saint has into the separate state, may depend in some measure on what his walk here has been. But we must be heedful not to judge any individual by this rule so as to come to hasty conclusions. Rather let each one of us use the thought *personally*, so as to quicken the soul to closer walking with

God. This remark may apply also to the degree of joy in a dying hour. It would seem as if some saints see heaven before they enter it, and that as regards Christ Himself, faith is almost turned into vision. But we must not judge those whose dying hours are without sensible joy. God is a sovereign in this respect, and disease has much to do with sensible enjoyment or mental depression. Let our aim ever be so to be living in communion with Christ, that "when we change places we may not change company."

*Section 5.***THE RELATION OF THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE SAINTS TO THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.**

“It seems too much for such as we,
But I in Him my title see,
And rest on God’s sure Word,
That word and oath that ends all strife,
That saith, he hath eternal life
Who hath the Christ of God.”

IN searching the New Testament with reference to the glorious future of the saints, we have been struck with one point very especially,—THE BRIGHT JEWEL OF GLORY IS ALWAYS SET IN THE GOLDEN RING OF REDEMPTION. We must ever keep this in view if we would “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Who that has deeply realized his own sinfulness, and insignificance, has not felt at times a kind of starting back from the thought of being for ever in glory. It

appears too much to hope for, something *less* would seem to be more fitting. I am too vile, too mean, for *all* that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

While experiencing this feeling, my mind was led to meditate upon the fact, that the grandest and most detailed descriptions of future blessedness contained in the New Testament are found in connection with the most ample testimonies to the work of redemption. Sometimes this testimony to what Christ has done and suffered comes *before* the statements respecting the glory, and sometimes *after* them, occasionally we have *both*; so that the glory is as it were embosomed in the grace, even as the Shekinah in the most Holy Place was embosomed in the folds of the incense which was to God a sweet savour of rest; or, like a costly gem set in a ring of pure gold.

We will just mention a few passages, in illustration of this point, with a view to

encourage a more lively and abounding hope of glory, solely on the ground of what Christ has done for us, and God's delight therein. If such glory seems too much for us to receive, we must ever remember that it is not too much for the God of all grace to give; seeing all our blessings from the pardon of our sins to the Crown of life are bestowed for the sake of another, even Him in whom God is well pleased, and whom He delights to honour.

If we read 2 Cor. iv. 16—18, and v. 1—8, we shall find a most glowing description of future blessedness. "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "A house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." "That mortality might be swallowed up of life." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." If we read the beginning of the ninth, and the latter part of the tenth chapters of this epistle, what an exhibition do we find of the redemptive work of Jesus, and of the character and grace of God as unfolded

thereby. 1 Cor. xv. is the grand resurrection chapter, shewing that a multitude of Adam's fallen race who had become the victims of sin, and the prey of death, should bear the image of the heavenly, be raised in glory, and inherit incorruption. But observe, this chapter begins with a testimony to the death, burial, and resurrection, of the Lord Jesus; in its course continual reference is made to His saving work, and the chapter closes with a triumphant song celebrating His glorious victories. In 1 Thess. iv. 15—18, and v. 1—9, we have a description of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection and rapture of the Saints, and their eternal abidance with Christ. This consoling and majestic passage is introduced by the words, "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him;" and it closes with the assurance, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."

In Rom. viii. 17—25, we read, “If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together ;” also, “of the glory that shall be revealed in us ;” “the manifestation of the sons of God ;” “the adoption ;” “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Now observe the surroundings of these words. In verses 1 to 4, we have the saving work of the great Substitute unfolded, ensuring to all who believe in Him the realization of all those saving offices of the Holy Spirit, revealed in the middle of the chapter ; while the verses from 30 to the end make a glorious display of the redeeming grace of the Saviour, and of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. In John xii. 26, the Lord Jesus promises, “where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my father honour,” (see also John xiv. 1—6) but, before He utters this promise of glory, He speaks of Himself as “a corn of wheat that must fall into the ground and die,” v. 24, and *afterwards* of

being "lifted up," signifying thereby what death he should die. Having quoted these few texts in order to exhibit the connection between redemption and the final glory, we give the following *references*. Perhaps there are *more*, but these will shew the affluence of the Word of God as regards this point, and may furnish Christians with a delightful subject for contemplation and communion.

Matt. xxvi. 27—29.
Luke ix. 31, with
 1 Pet. i. 16, 17.
Rom. vi. 5—8.
1 Cor. ii. 7—10.
Ephes. i. 10—12.
Ephes. ii. 5—7, with
 iii. 10.
Ephes. v. 25—27.
Phil. iii. 9, 11—14.
Coloss. i. 12—14; 20
 —22.
Coloss. iii. 1—4.
2 Tim. i. 9, 10.
Titus ii. 13, 14.
Heb. ii. 9—11.

Heb. v. 8—10.
Heb. ix. 23, 26, 28.
Heb. xii. 22, 24.
Heb. xiii. 12—14.
1 Pet. i. 3, 9, 18.
1 Pet. v. 4, 10.
1 John iii. 1, 2, 5.
Jude 21—24.
Rev. i. 5.
Rev. iii. 21.
Rev. v. 9, 10, 12, 13.
Rev. vii. 9—17.
Rev. xiv. 4, 5.
Rev. xix. 1, 9.
Rev. xxi. 22, 23.
Rev. xxii. 1—14.

Every one of these texts more or less clearly in some form or other, unfolds the future blessedness of the saints, and in each one there is some reference to the Lord Jesus and His glorious work. When our poor narrow hearts start back from this wondrous prospect and say, "it is too vast, too good, for such as we are," let us meditate upon the connection between redemption and glory, and we shall see that though the wages of sin is death, and we have all earned them, yet, "the gift of God is eternal LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." It is all GIFT ! GIFT ! It has been well observed, "that it is a precious gift of God to be able to connect our justification with eternal glory," and Rom. v. 1, 2, 17, and viii. 30. Titus iii. 8, and Heb. ix. 15, 16, shew that we have a clear right to do so. "The sufferings of Christ (says Mr. Offord) merited and earned the glory," and he adds, "I have often marvelled that the saints of God, should wish to mitigate the sufferings of Christ as they sometimes do.

What are they doing? Trying to cut the roots of eternal glory, so that its fruits shall not be so vast nor so precious. The glory just springs out of our Lord's sufferings, so that we cannot afford to lessen, the vastness and the magnitude of these sufferings."

This precious fact, of glory being thus connected with grace and redemption, exhibits to us the boundless excellency of that glory. We may hence infer its permanence, yea, its eternal duration. Nothing stands so firm as the rock of redemption, and the palace of glory is built thereon. This fact also insures *progression*, and *increase*—as regards the glory. In proportion as redemption is known, will the glory increase. We also infer the social character of future blessedness. All the redeemed will meet in the same blessed home, and their communion together in that glory, will have respect to that redemption out of which it grows, and by which eternal continuance is secured.

Section 6.

CONSOLING AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
 IN PROSPECT OF SOON ENTERING ON
 THE SEPARATE STATE.

We will now endeavour to make a practical application of the awakening fact of our spirits being called to exist in a disembodied state in a world of spirits, and amidst scenes and associations of which we can have scarcely any adequate idea while here. Who that has thought upon it has not exclaimed—

“O the hour when this material,
 Shall have vanished like a cloud ;
 When amid the wide ethereal,
 All th’ invisible shall crowd.

In that sudden strange transition,
 By what new and finer sense ;
 Shall I grasp the mighty vision,
 And receive its influence.”

We know not what locality we shall go to, nor the conditions of this transitional state of being ; but this we know that it will be a spirit world, a world inhabited only by souls and disembodied spirits. We have, hitherto, only had experience of an existence in a material organization, and amidst physical and sinful things ; but there how different will everything be ! We doubt not that in the ultimate state of the saved there will be something more than ethereality ; there will then be the existence of matter sublimated and refined, and exhibited in grander forms, and more glorious hues than we have now any idea of, but it may not be so in that place where the souls of the righteous will dwell. It may be a reconciling thought as regards what will be to us an abnormal state, to remember that "God is a Spirit" in the highest and truest sense, and that Angels too, though in a lower sense, are spirits ; so that a disembodied state will be after all no

anomaly. We shall not be unfitted by it for higher things, but rather be more fitted for fellowship with God, and His holy Angels.

It may be that this is part of the divine plan and process for training His children, developing their powers, and preparing them for their full and final state of glory. Not that such a condition will be absolutely necessary, because some who will be glorified with Christ will not die; but like Enoch and Elijah will be translated; or, as the Apostle writes, "changed in a moment."

But leaving these suppositions we take the *fact* that, when our brief life here is ended, we shall be taken to a spirit world, very, very different from this. Not to speak of the difference in the localities, we would call attention to the alteration there must be in circumstances, and engagements. How many things which here constitute our daily life, and largely make up our existence, cannot

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come there. We need not enumerate them, anyone can do that who considers the difference between soul and body, between materiality and spirituality. The comparative silence of the word of God as regards the condition and employments of happy spirits in a disembodied state, and whether they know anything about us now, or have any access to us, must be acknowledged by all. It is *not* positively said that no such knowledge and access can be realized by them ; but we cannot say that it is so, for God's word is silent. Thus we are shut up, as regards our departed Christian friends, to seek our present comfort first and most in communion with Christ, in whom all holy persons and blessed things are found. Whoever may, or may not, come to us, or know about us, our infinite friend says, “I WILL COME TO YOU,” and “I know my sheep.”

We have also much food for hope in God's Word as regards our future intercourse, not

only with those we once knew, but with all the family of God. But we must *wait*. "What may be the nature," says one, "of our employments there we have small means of knowing, and I believe that it is in mercy that God has not vouchsafed to reveal more, as it is in mercy He has revealed so much. He but lifts up the veil so high as to encourage us on."

That deep thinker, Isaac Taylor, observes, "In front of *every veil* is written 'HAVE FAITH IN GOD,' and as we shall have need to keep our eyes upon that inscription when about ourselves to pass the curtain that hides from us the future life; so for our comfort, we must continually regard it when those dear to us pass from sight."

We wonder with deep sadness how many poor souls must feel when suddenly called to leave this world and the body, and to enter on a world where eating and drinking, build-

ing and planting, buying and selling come not; where the postman's knock is never heard, and the stirring daily journal never comes. For such to be cut off at once and for ever from all that constituted their *life*, and to have nothing to fall back upon, will be terrible indeed !

This mournful train of thought we pursue not, but would earnestly remind ourselves and others how important it is with such a mysterious state of existence in the near prospect, perhaps *very near*, that we should be weaned in a real sense from the things that are seen and temporal, and be really connected with those things which are unseen and eternal. How earnestly should each one enquire, Do I really possess a true life? Have I another life besides this life of eating, drinking, talking, reading, working, getting, spending? Have I an *inner* life, a life in God's presence, a life of faith on the Son of God? Do I in any real sense live in the Spirit and

walk in the Spirit? Does my soul as really feed on God's truth as my body feeds on the bounties of God's providence? When the shades of night are drawn around me, when all is silent, when neither eye, nor ear, nor any other sense finds employment, have I then been most pleasantly active and alive? thus realizing that I require not earthly companionship and material objects to constitute a *better life* even here! Do I know as really as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did, what it is while having to do with flocks and herds, silver and gold, children and cares, journeying and resting, to have to do with invisible and eternal things? Do I look for a city which hath foundations? Do I really embrace God's promises, feel persuaded of them, and confess that I am a stranger and pilgrim on the earth? Does God *endorse* my confession, call Himself my God and enable me to call Him mine, my Father, my eternal ALL? These are questions of the deepest interest, What can we say to them?

If such is really our case then our solicitude should be to have all these things in an ever increasing degree, so that we may be able in truth to say, "now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. ii. 12. "He who hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. v. 5.

We should do well often to ask what are the best means of promoting an increasing fitness for the spirit world, so that if called suddenly to enter it we may not be found *unready*. We speak not now of that meetness which is only in the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer; every one who by faith is united to Him is in this sense "made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." We speak of a *practical readiness* which we are earnestly expected to be con-

tinually solicitous about, and which we should seek daily to realize.

We do not think that reading books containing man's imaginings concerning heaven are at all conducive to this end. Some books of this kind attractively written, and very popular, are positively injurious, producing mawkish sentimentalism instead of intelligent and soul purifying hope. What is the use of imagining things concerning which God is silent, and writing dialogues and conversations which have no existence but in the brains of panderers to a corrupt taste. This is as bad or worse than the miserable web-spinning of the well-paid religious novelist, who manufactures extraordinary conversions and remarkable death-bed scenes *to order and for gain.*

If any God-taught writer with an honest conscience and a warm heart, can expound God's Word, bring out its teaching concern-

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ing the future, and collect the scattered rays of heavenly light found all over the Scriptures into a focus, let him do it, and we will be thankful. Such books as Baxter's "Saint's Rest," Watts' "World to Come," and Cheever's "Powers of the World to Come," though of course imperfect, will be held in everlasting remembrance, while the sooner much that has been written about heaven perishes from the earth, the better it will be for the interests of immortal beings.

But the best means of promoting a right state of mind and heart towards the world to come, and producing a real connection with the unseen and eternal is the "Word of God and prayer." Probably many saints who have been immured in dungeons, or banished into deserts, or confined to their beds for years, have enjoyed the largest earnest of heaven, and manifested the highest degree of readiness to change worlds; God's Word read or what they could recollect of it

applied by the Holy Spirit has been the means of detaching them from earth, assimilating them to heaven, and ever making them quite willing to depart and be with Christ.

Yes, meditation on God's Word, and communion with Him are the best preparatives for another world. The Author of that book which alone unfolds the future state, even the Spirit of truth, is ever near to interpret it, and to seal home its promises to all who seek His much needed aid.

“The gracious Spirit of our God,
Reveals a heaven to come,
And beams of glory in His Word,
Allure and guide us home.”

We do not urge meditation only on those passages which refer to the separate state and ultimate glory, but a loving acquaintance with the *whole* of God's testimony concerning His own character, the Person and work of His beloved Son, the offices and grace of the Comforter. The histories, trials, and triumphs

of God's people should also specially be studied, because, in this faithful record we trace how God trains His people for their high destiny, we see the bearing of present tribulation on future blessedness, and how the "light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The connection between suffering and glory so wondrously exhibited in the beloved Son of God, is also to be traced in the history of the many sons whom He will bring to glory. "If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him;" yea, "we shall be glorified together." Those who stand before the Throne with robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, are said to have come out of great tribulation. Those who will be for ever joint inheritors with Christ, must first drink of His cup, carry their cross, and have as a mark of their sonship, an experience of Fatherly chastenings. Heb. xii. 8—12.

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown ;
No pilgrim ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers on the road.”

In some cases the road is rough and the blast more bitter, when near home ; but He who endured the bitter cross knows all, and will support through all. Stephen thought little of the bitter ending of his earthly course, while he felt heaven already begin as the glory streamed forth, and the glorified Saviour stood waiting to receive his spirit.

And now with a contrast scene to this, and a short extract relating thereto from a talented writer, we would bring our meditation to a close. It is a lovely episode in the marvellous forty days of the Lord’s stay on earth after the resurrection, and it sheds a cheering light on the believer’s exit when by death, whatever the manner of it may be, he is called to glorify the Lord.

Peter was just about to put off his taber-

nacle, when two scenes in the history of his beloved Master were brought to his mind. One was on the sea of Galilee, and the other on the Holy Mount. As he reviewed these and connected them together, his faith grew stronger, and his hope became brighter and brighter. He was quite sure that he had not followed cunningly devised fables, that an eternity of infinite realities lay before him, and that he was just about to *begin* the enjoyment of this blessedness. "The morning is dawning, the gray of night going away, the lake is still; and yonder, standing on the shore, in the uncertain light, there is one dim figure, and one disciple catches sight of Him, and another casts himself into the water, and they find a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and Christ gathers them around His table, and they all know that 'it is the Lord.' It is what the death of the Christian man, who has gone through life recognizing Christ

everywhere, may well become,—the morning dawning, and the finished work, and the figure standing on the quiet beach, so that the last plunge into the cold flood that yet separates us, will not be taken with trembling reluctance ; but, drawn to Him by the love beaming out of His face, and upheld by the power of His beckoning presence, we shall struggle through the latest wave that parts us, and scarcely feel its chill, nor know that we *have* crossed it, till falling blessed at His feet, we see, by the nearer and clearer vision of His face, that this is indeed heaven. And looking back upon the sea that brought us thither, we shall behold its waters flashing in the light of that everlasting morning, and hear them breaking into music upon the Eternal Shore. And then, when all the weary night-watchers on the stormy ocean of life are gathered together around Him who watched them from His throne on the bordering mountains of Eternity, where the day shines for ever—then He will seat them at

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His table in His kingdom, and none will need to ask, 'Who art thou?' or 'Where am I?' for all shall know that 'it is the Lord,' and the full, perfect, unchangeable vision of His blessed face will be heaven!"

"O if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul would stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through death's iron gate,
Nor feel its terrors as she passed!"

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lay my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

And when that life *has been* breathed out it will be into His hands, and His loving presence will be its element for ever. And will not the redeemed spirit, released from the mortal sinful body, so long its cloy, so long Satan's tempting place, soliloquise somewhat as follows:—I have died at last. The dreaded event is over, and I shall die no more. I have done with death, and all fear of death.



I have died ; and Christ has been magnified in me in death, all glory to His faithful love. I have died ; and now I shall sin no more, the great trouble of my life is gone ; it presses down my soul no longer. How I rise and soar now. I have died ; the body and I have parted, I have put off my tabernacle, but we shall meet again, and be joined in a sinless and glorious union. Though my body may remain a few years in the dark grave, I am in a wondrous region of unclouded light, all doubt, all uncertainty, all perplexity are over ; my surroundings are grand, holy, and wonderful, and my hope of resurrection and perfected glory, strong and unclouded. I am already in far better society than I have left behind, though that was very precious to me. But there are no drawbacks where I am now, envy, pride, selfishness, unloveliness, cannot rise within me, or appear around me. I have entered into rest. I rest in God Himself, His perfections as revealed in Christ are all ele-

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ments of blessedness to me. There is no variableness or shadow of turning in *Him*, and so my happiness rests upon an immutable and eternal foundation.

“O glorious hour, O blest abode !
I now am near and like my God,
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of my soul.”

And this end of conflict, sin, and sorrow, is a new beginning of blessedness, without end.

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In a "Memorandum" penned some months since, for perusal after his decease, he wrote — "My long life (much longer than ever I expected) must now be drawing to a close. May Christ be magnified in me, whether it be by life or by death. I know *no hope but* Him, 'all other ground is sinking sand.' If any grave-stone is erected let my *first* text (1 Tim. i. 15.) be inserted upon it, *the whole verse*, not omitting the last words, for I often think that *I* must be the chief."

Shortly before his death he said, "Tell all the dear Christian friends 'TO WALK SO AS TO PLEASE GOD.' "

Heb. vi. 12., xii. 2. Titus ii. 13, 14.

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78 *Consoling and Practical Considerations.*

of God's people should also specially be studied, because, in this faithful record we trace how God trains His people for their high destiny, we see the bearing of present tribulation on future blessedness, and how the "light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The connection between suffering and glory so wondrously exhibited in the beloved Son of God, is also to be traced in the history of the many sons whom He will bring to glory. "If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him;" yea, "we shall be glorified together." Those who stand before the Throne with robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, are said to have come out of great tribulation. Those who will be for ever joint inheritors with Christ, must first drink of His cup, carry their cross, and have as a mark of their sonship, an experience of Fatherly chastenings. Heb. xii. 8—12.

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown ;
No pilgrim ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers on the road.”

In some cases the road is rough and the blast more bitter, when near home ; but He who endured the bitter cross knows all, and will support through all. Stephen thought little of the bitter ending of his earthly course, while he felt heaven already begin as the glory streamed forth, and the glorified Saviour stood waiting to receive his spirit.

And now with a contrast scene to this, and a short extract relating thereto from a talented writer, we would bring our meditation to a close. It is a lovely episode in the marvellous forty days of the Lord’s stay on earth after the resurrection, and it sheds a cheering light on the believer’s exit when by death, whatever the manner of it may be, he is called to glorify the Lord.

Peter was just about to put off his taber-

